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CHICAGO (CBS) - In Chicago this year alone officials have had to close beaches 30 times because of high levels of pollution.

According to the Natural Resources Defense Council Illinois led the nation in 2007 in beach closings due in large part to the high number of closings in Chicagoland.

"We have learned that beach closings in this area are up 30 percent, and Illinois ranks number one in the number of beach closings in the United States," said Rep. Mark Kirk (R-10th District).

Congresswoman Judy Biggert says that dubious distinction adds up to a multi-million dollar hit to the local economy.

"The economic loss as the result of closing one Lake Michigan beach ranges from \$9,000 to \$37,000 per day," Biggert (R-13th District) said.

The head of the congressional Great Lake Task Force says the human cost exacted by dirty water may be even greater.

"We expect based on this report we are releasing today that 300 people can expect to contract respiratory illnesses after swimming in Lake Michigan," Kirk said.

And that's not over the year, but every single weekend, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Those are the type of numbers that have lawmakers and activists pushing for better public notification laws so people know exactly what they're swimming in before they go for a dip.

Under the current system, activists say swimmers are left to discover contamination information after the fact.

The 31st Street beach ranked seventh worst on the list, with bacteria levels exceeding the EPA's maximum standards 40 percent of the time.

It should be noted that Illinois tests 75 percent of its beaches and tests more frequently than most other states, so that could account for part of the high failure rate.